MINUTES

OF THE

CONVENTION OF ELDERS AND DEACONS

OF THE

Synod of North Carolina,

AT GREENSBORO'

February 24th and 25th, 1858.

FAYETTEVILLE:
NORTH CAROLINA PRESBYTERIAN OFFICE.
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THE ELSON COLLECTION RBR E Pam. # 526a

MINUTES.

At a meeting of the Elders held in Charlotte, on the 21st October, 1857, at the close of the Synod, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That a Convention of Ruling Elders and Deacons of the Presbyterian Church, be held in Greensboro', at 7 o'clock P. M., on the last Wednesday (the 24th) February, 1858.

In obedience to the above resolution, a Convention met in the Presbyterian Church in Greensboro', at 7 o'clock P. M., and was organized by the appointment of the following officers:

Dr. Charles L. Payne, (E.) Orange Presbytery, President.

Wm. Murdock, (E.) Concord Presbytery; Wm. H. Cumming, (E.) Orange Presbytery; A. McD. Martin, (D.) Fayetteville, Vice Presidents.

L. B. Krimminger, (D.) Concord Presbytery; A. T. Summey, (E.) Concord Presbytery; D. P. Weir, (E.) Orange Presbytery, Secretaries.

After prayer by the Rev. Martin McQueen, of Fayetteville Presbytery, the Convention was addressed by the Hon. A. W. Venable, on the duties of the office-bearers of the church.

On motion of Dr. E. Nye Hutchison, theroll of the churches in the Synod was called, and the following delegates appeared, were enrolled, and took their seats in the Convention:

ORANGE PRESBYTERY.

Alamance—C. H. Wiley, James Paisley, Joseph W. Gilmer, Finley Shaw and J. W. McMurray, Elders.

Buffaloe—E. Donnell, Harper Donnell, David Wharton, Samuel Hatrick, Elders; Thomas B. Donnell, Deacon.

Greensboro'—R. Gorrell, W. W. Wharton, Wm. H. Cumming, Dr. D. C. Mebane, Jesse H. Lindsay, D. P. Weir, Elders; A. Weatherly, M. Rose, F. M. Walker, R. G.Lindsay, Deacons.

Lexington—Dr. Chas. L. Payne, Elder.
Nut Bush—W. C. Bullock, Elder.
Shiloh—A. W. Venable, G. T. Baskerville, Elders.

FAYETTEVILLE PRESBYTERY.

Fayetteville—Dr. Henry C. Robinson, Deacon.
Grove—J. E. Hall, R. B. Carr, Elders.
Mt. Carmel—A. McD. Martin, Deacon.
Wilmington—R. W. Gibbs, Elder.

CONCORD PRESBYTERY.

Asheville—A. T. Summey, Elder.
Bethpage—N. Johnston, Elder; S. M. Furr, Deacon.
Back Creek—Dr. S. D. Rankin, Elder.
Bethel—J. R. Gillespie, Elder.
Concord Town—V. C. Barringer, Elder.
Charlotte—Dr. E. Nye Hutchison, Elder; J. L. Brown, Chas. Overman, Deacons.
Long Creek—J. H. Ramsour, Elder.
Mallard Creek—S. W. Caldwell, Elder.
Poplar Tent—W. S. Harris, Elder; L. B. Krimminger, D.
Prospect—J. Rumple, James Beattie, Elder.
Ramah—T. H. Hambleton, Elder.
Rocky River—S. McKinley, J. O. Pharr, J. M. Black, Elders.
Salisbury—D. A. Davis, Wm. Murdock, Elders; John D. Brown, Deacon.
Sugar Creek—Ira Parks, E. C. Wallace, Elders.
Steel Creek—A. G. Neel, Elder; R. W. McDowell, Deacon.
Sharon—C. T. Alexander, Elder.

On motion of Dr. E. Nye Hutchison, the following committee was appointed to prepare business for the Convention:

Hon. A. W. Venable, C. H. Wiley, (E.) A. Weatherly, (D.) Orange Presbytery; Dr. E. Nye Hutchison, W. S. Harris, (E.) J. L. Brown, (D.) Concord Presbytery; R. W. Gibbs, J. E. Hall, (E.) A. McD. Martin, (D.) Fayetteville Presbytery.

On motion of A. W. Venable, it was

Resolved, That when this Convention adjourn, it shall be to meet on to-morrow morning, in the Lecture-Room, at 9 o'clock, to spend an hour in devotional exercises.

V. C. Barringer offered the following resolution, which was adopted:

Resolved, That all Presbyterian Ministers present be requested to sit as corresponding members of this Convention.

On motion of A. W. Venable, the Convention adjourned, to meet in the Lecture-Room to-morrow morning at 9 o'clock.

Prayer by Rev. J. Jones Smyth.

THURSDAY MORNING—9 O'CLOCK.

The Convention met according to adjournment, and was opened with devotional exercises. The Convention was addressed by V. C. Barringer, Dr. Chas. L. Payne, and Ralph Gorrell on the duties of the office-bearers of the Church.

The committee appointed to prepare business for the consideration of the convention through their Chairman, Hon. A. W. Venable, offered the following

REPORT AND RESOLUTIONS:

The committee appointed to prepare business for the Convention of Elders and Deacons of the Presbyterian Church in North Carolina respectfully report: That they find many subjects which present themselves for consideration, involving the interests and prosperity of that portion of the vineyard of our Lord committed in a great degree to our care. They are deeply impressed with the fact, that there has been much misapprehension of the importance of the offices which they hold, as well as a sad neglect of the obvious duties which are connected with them, even in the most common understanding of their relation to the Church. It is not necessary to analyse minutely the reasons why such offices are indispensable in an ecclesiastical organization, to be convinced that much that is to be deplored in the present state of our Church, is justly referable to our failure as office-bearers to meet the responsibilities which our position and our vows create.

It is, therefore, a subject of deep gratitude to the Great Head of the Church, that he has moved the heart of so many of those who bear office and rule in his Church, to come together in order that they may prayerfully consider the causes for which Zion mourns, and by speaking to one another, arrive, by divine guidance and direction, to such conclusions as may enlarge our Christian affection, increase our diligence, and impart new energy in pressing forward the great enterprise of evangelising the world. We would come with humble submission to him, who being the fountain of life, giveth to him that asketh knowledge liberally and upbraideth not, in order that we may be instructed in the best way to increase his declarative glory, by promoting the salvation of sinners and the edification of the body of Christ. The field of duty and investigation is so extensive, that the committee do not propose to occupy it all at this time, trusting that this is but the beginning of a movement in the right direction, which, leading to the light, will be followed by others, which, under more favorable circumstances, may effect more and more for the prosperity of a cause dear to the hearts of all who love the Saviour. There are, however, some facts so prominent and standing out in such bold relief, that it is manifest that they must be fully appreciated before we can hope to effect any valuable purpose by our deliberations or our conclusions.

I. SCARCITY OF MINISTERS IN OUR SYNOD.

The first to which we would call attention is the scarcity of ministers within the Synod of North Carolina. The number of Presbyterian ministers is very small when we consider the area and population of the State and the actual destitution of the means of religious instruction, even with all the efforts of our brethren of other evangelical denominations who are with us, upholding the standard of the cross. Compared to the hosts of the enemy, they are a small band indeed, and but for the promise of him who, when commissioning his ambassadors on the Mount of Ascension, assured them that he would be with them always even to the end of the world, they might well become the subjects of dismay and despair. But there is another aspect in which we must deplore the smallness of our company of ministerial laborers. We, as Presbyterians, are called upon to lament that within

the bounds of this Synod there are so many vacant, weak, dying congregations, where the light of Christian ordinances but dimly flickers in the socket, admonishing us of the certainty of the coming darkness, unless something is done for its renewal. The statistics of our Synod disclose the fact, that with more communicants and more candidates for the ministry than either Virginia or South Carolina, each of the Synods of those States outnumbers us in ministers. And when we know that this state of things has existed for a long time, the church must ask, Where are our sons who have been reared amongst us as our spiritual guides? Whither have they gone and why does the Macedonian cry of feeble churches in our Synod meet with no cheering response? The fault is not at the door of our Christian brethren who have been set apart for the ministry of the sanctuary by our Presbyteries. They are not idlers in the Lord's vineyard.

In the Missionary field in other States we hear of the blessed and honored of the Lord, proclaiming the great truths of a living gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from above to seal his word. Why then does not the number of our ministers increase with the increasing population and wants of our State? Why, then, are so many congregations vacant, so many in a dying condition and so large a number compelled to be content with the privileges of God's house one or two Sabbaths in a month? The answer is obvious. That must be a strong motive, an irresistible reason which will overcome love of native land, and every early association, cause men to sever all those ties which grew and strengthened from early infancy, and seek fields of labor among strangers and far away from those whose counsels and whose prayers had been so instrumental in the formation of their characters. Such motives and such reasons do exist. The world is not much altered since the time when he, who commanded his disciples to go and preach the Gospel, required them to take neither scrip or purse, and not to sacrifice the dignity of the commission by any unmanly or cringing subserviency; to eat what was set before them and to bless every house that received them, but to shake the dust from their feet against those who received them not, and depart to other cities. Men have not changed since the apostle declared that he who preached the Gospel should live by the Gospel. Ministers are but men, with the wants and frailties of men, usually, men in whom the Spirit dwell-

eth, but needing all the aids and comforts and having a right to all the happiness which is found in the family circle and the associations of friendship; men who if filled with the Spirit of their master will endure hardships and encounter poverty, pain, and death when that is duty. But be it remembered that the great Head of the church alone calls them to these trials. The church on earth has no right to do so, unless the indications of duty from heaven are clear and unmistakable.

We have no right to demand sacrifices of our ministers which we refuse to make ourselves The appalling truth stares us in the face that with full ability to support all the ministers reared in our State and many more, the Presbyterian church has witnessed the exodus of those soldiers of the cross without an effort to supply their place when they felt called to go out from us, or to sustain them in fields of labor in our own bounds in which they might have been employed. Our pastors are most insufficiently provided for; their numbers are reduced, their labors spread over fields too extensive for the existence of pastoral relations, or the performance of pastoral duties. The flocks become strangers to the shepherds and dwindle away.

This fact calls for our first consideration. That it exists in all its deleterious effects we must concede. That there is a remedy, none can deny who believes in the final triumph of Christ over the enemies of his cause. He permits his children often to learn lessons from afflictions and chastisements, which prosperity did not teach them. The committee are constrained to declare their belief that a large part of the blame lies at our own doors, as office bearers in the church of Christ. We have shrunk from urging upon the congregations the indispensable duty of sustaining not only our Pastors, but in supplying the destitute within our own borders. The claims of God upon the worldly goods of his people, have not been urged in deference to a depraved public opinion *that harm will be done by it. Great has been the evil which has resulted from its neglect.* Many Pastors have taken this indifference to their comfort and support as an indication that God had use for them elsewhere, and a congregation has often been surprised at the notice that a request would be made that Presbytery would dissolve their relation to their Pastor, who have never felt any surprise that that pastor could not live and support his family with an insufficient salary irregularly paid.

The collection and payment of the Pastor's salary is the peculiar duty of the office bearers of the church. It is wholly wrong to leave any portion of that duty to the Pastor himself. The call which fixes his compensation professes that he shall be relieved from worldly care, and the evil, of which we feel the scourge, will never be eradicated until the Elders and Deacons of the church come up to the duty of fearlessly urging upon the hearers of the gospel, and those who are under God placed under their authority, to pay a fair and just consideration to those who are their pastors, their spiritual leaders laboring in word and doctrine. Our young men will leave our fields of labor, our congregations will continue to decline, and Presbyterianism cease to be aggressive, if we who have vowed to study the peace, purity, unity and prosperity of the church, shall be so much afraid of offending mammon, as to decline urging the propriety, duty and honesty, of making a fair return to him whose physical and intellectual nature is devoted to our use and benefit. There must be reform here. Our neglect of duty has been glaring; it becomes us to confess, repent and amend.

II. VACANT AND FEEBLE CONGREGATIONS—ONE REMEDY SUGGESTED. EVANGELISTS.

The second prominent fact to which the committee calls the attention of the Convention is, the existence of so many vacant and feeble congregations within our bounds. They call upon us with a voice which must be heard, and assert claims which cannot be disregarded. Many of them were always far from wealthy, and many more have been so weakened by death and emigration as to be rendered unable to secure the stated administration of the ordinances of God's house. They are in our midst and around us, and as well may the professing christian—who sits comfortably by his fire listening to the howlings of the storm without, conscious that his stock are fed and housed and all his dependents provided for, without one care for the destitute who suffer from wants which his superfluities would amply supply—console himself that he has provided for the wants of his own house, and is free from the curse of being worse than an infidel, as for those who by the blessing of God are able to support their pastor, and secure the means of grace for themselves and their families, to com-

fort themselves with the assurance that they have done all their duty. "Be thou fed and be thou clothed," unaccompanied with any effort thereto, is just as inefficient for good, and as worthless in the church as it was when the inspired apostle used the words in stern rebuke to those who were remiss in *doing* duty in his day and time. The most obvious remedy for this state of things is to be found in the employment of a sufficient number of Evangelists under the care and direction of our Presbyteries whose employment and duty it shall be to devote themselves to preaching to vacant churches, strengthening the feeble by the ordinances of the sanctuary, and finding out by careful exploration fields for Presbyterian occupation. One single Presbytery occupies nearly or entirely half of the State, and in more than half of the counties there is not a Presbyterian Minister. We need the itinerant Evangelists, systematically employed by our Presbyteries, in connection with our previous system of settled Pastors. The right sort of men can be obtained, and if the Church prays, the Head of that Church will bless. But this system demands money, and a considerable amount of it. This is true; it is also true that the gold and silver are the Lord's, and that an offering which costs nothing, is usually worth nothing. But once organize a corps of Evangelists and place them in the field—making it their duty to preach and enforce the duty of sustaining the gospel and it will constantly approximate a self-sustaining institution. We are not wanting in examples of other christian denominations, who have been built up and sustained by the labours of Itinerant Evangelists; Evangelists, who are supported by their denominations, and whose history records continued and glorious aggressions upon the dominions of the enemy of human souls.

To raise this money is the proper work of the Elders and Deacons by continually keeping the duty of making sacrifices for this great cause if necessary, before the people under their charge. To aid in organizing such a system, it is the duty of Elders to be punctual in attending the Ecclesiastical Courts—the Presbyteries and Synods—to share the labours and responsibilities which their vows have required at their hands. This movement would most properly originate with Laymen, who could not be suspected of providing places for themselves. The hearts of our brethren who are in the ministry are with this enterprise, and they are ready to labor as well as to aid, to the extent of their ability;

but the Elders and Deacons must take the lead at least in providing the means for sustaining Evangelists in the field of labour. The blessing of our Master will attend and follow the effort. "He that watereth shall himself be watered," "Give and it shall be given unto you good measure, pressed down, and running over shall men pour into your bosom," are words uttered by Him who said "Heaven and earth may pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Here then is a desolation of Zion to call for our christian labour and benevolence; vacant, feeble, dying congregations of our denomination, cry out to the Church for succor; let us repent because we have so long been unmindful of these claims, and come up to our duty, depending upon the arm of Him whose "blessing maketh rich and addeth no sorrow therewith."

III. RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION OF THE COLORED POPULATION—DUTY OF PASTORS AND LAY OFFICERS

The Committee would further invite the attention of this Convention to the vast importance of some systematic effort for the religious instruction of the colored population within our bounds, especially those occupying the relation of servants to their owners. It is far from our purpose to remove or lessen the responsibilities of Christian masters and mistresses to provide for the domestic religious training of these members of their households. This is a solemn duty growing out of and inseparable from the relation, the neglect of which is a grievous sin. This duty cannot be neglected without a sinful disregard of the family relations existing between the parties and the rights which in a Christian organization arise and exist between the heads and members of households. Of such an obvious truth it is not necessary to speak further on this occasion. But we speak of providing the preaching of the word of life and the ordinances of the sanctuary for that class of persons so numerous amongst us. In this respect there has been a great neglect of duty by the church both in its individual and organized capacity. Much has been done in Christianizing that portion of our population, but it has been in a great measure incidental. Religious influences have reached them through the ordinary means of grace chiefly provided for the white population, and God has cheered our hearts by the manifest blessing he has vouchsafed to bestow upon such partial ef-

forts. There are a great number of sincere and devout Christians, and a vast amount of deep and fervent piety amongst the colored population of our State. They present a most interesting class of persons, very susceptible to the influence of gospel truth, with much native simplicity of character. Much, very much has been effected even with the small amount of effort which has been made, and the African population sustaining the relation which they do in the Southern States exhibit an amount of intelligence, civilization, and Christianization, combined with comfort and improved condition utterly unknown to that race in its whole history in any age and country. This result is attributable mainly, if not exclusively, to the influence of the Gospel of Christ operating upon both the white and colored population, but especially upon the last.

The uniform experience of those engaged in preaching the gospel to them is that they are a most interesting and teachable people in the great concern of salvation. It would seem that the eminent success in the propagation of Christian truth amongst them with efforts comparatively so small, is a clear indication from heaven of our duty to labor more zealously in so promising a field. Our servants constitute portions of our families, they are of our congregations; they labor for our advantage and are entitled to the soundest religious instruction. It is a fair subject of enquiry whether much of our leanness and barrenness, much of the dilapidations in our crumbling and wasting churches is not a judgment from heaven for neglect in this regard. It is not enough that they have opportunity occasionally to attend preaching on the Sabbath, sometimes of one and sometimes of another denomination, often at a great distance, and under great disadvantages, often excluded from the house by a crowd of white hearers, and not usually provided with proper facilities for their comfort during worship. This is not enough, indeed it presents a melancholy dereliction of duty. We are Presbyterians, we provide Presbyterian influence for our white families, we are equally bound to provide them for our servants. We would not be misunderstood, we rejoice in every effort made by our brethren of other denominations for the religious instruction of the colored population, we bid them God speed and would use their example and success to "stir up the pure minds of our own people by way of remembrance." We speak of the neglect of Presbyterian Elders and

Deacons of the laity of our church to come up to this high and holy work in the spirit of their Master. In order to the effective operation of any plan for the religious improvement of our servants, it must be systematic and perseveringly employed. It is not enough to assign certain portions of the house of worship to them, in which they shall be secure from interruption; there must be special appointments made for them, not indeed to the exclusion of whites, but where the body of our country churches is assigned for their accommodation, whilst those white persons attending should occupy such portions of the house as they may find most convenient. Here the pastor should consider himself as peculiarly preaching to them and prepare himself for their instruction. To these meetings the Elders and Deacons of the church should invariably come, bringing their families of servants and upholding the hands of their pastor in this work of love and truth. If necessary one whole Sabbath in the month at least should be devoted to this class of hearers, which, together with afternoon preachings on other Sabbaths, and such religious instructions as the pastor may be enabled to give in families during the week, would in a short time present a wonderful change in the religious condition of our servants; a change at once so beneficial to master and servant, so full of the blessing of God that we shall learn by the contrast how much of duty has been neglected and how much of blessing has been lost. None but the Elders, Deacons and Laity can safely and properly lead in this movement. Our good must not be evil spoken of. The laity are usually the owners of the class of persons whose spiritual interests we would promote, and their presence and approbation as well as active support of a prudent system for their religious training, would put to silence the reproaches of those whose opposition to the progress of the cause of Christ would seek such an occasion for a development. Your committee hope that this subject will engage much of the attention of this body, and that prayerful and deliberate investigation may lead to such suggestions as will promote the edification as well as awaken the energies of the church. That there has been remissness here we confess, and that we are solemnly called upon to amend, and for the future increase our efforts for the religious training of those who must look to the churches for such voluntary effort as they may choose to make as their only hope for instruction in the way of salvation.

IV. ATTENDANCE ON MEETINGS OF PRESBYTERIES AND SYNOD.

We cannot pretermit another fact in which the records of our Presbyteries and Synods disclose a sad dereliction in the discharge of duty by the Elders of our churches. We mean their remissness in responding to the calls of their sessions in attending the meetings of those bodies.

There has been sometimes a complaint of the undue influence of ministers in our ecclesiastical courts. This comes with a bad grace from a class of persons who, if punctual in their attendance, must of necessity outnumber and outvote them. Each pastoral charge and each vacant congregation is entitled to one Elder, and should they, as they are bound by duty to do, attend the meetings of Presbytery and Synod, they would have the control of their decisions. It is, however, with no such view that their punctual attendance is urged. We have no complaints to make of our self-denying brethren—ministers and pastors who, with such sacrifices of time and convenience, go up to those solemn assemblies. We confess to them and the church against ourselves, who have so often heretofore withheld our support, our counsel and the encouragement of our presence, when they would have been so highly appreciated and so salutary in their influence. If the Elders from vacant and feeble congregations would be prompt and regular in their attendance—if they would press their claims to the sympathies, prayers and labors of the brethren—much of the desolation of our Zion would have been prevented and much Christian zeal awakened which was dormant because the facts were not fully known. Besides, the great republican feature of our constitution, derived from the New Testament, is *lay representation in ecclesiastical bodies.* The church has many secular interests as well as spiritual. The ministers have a right to the counsel and experience of brethren whose secular employments give them familiarity with their details. In this particular the Elders of the church are greatly to blame. There has been sad neglect of duty here; our vows as Elders as much require our punctual attendance when chosen to represent our congregations, or when acting alone for congregations where there is only one Elder, as they bind us to meet at a constitutional call for business in the ordinary duties to the church under our charge, to admit members or to exercise discipline. To expect the successful ad-

ministration of any form of government, all the component parts of its organization must be in due and proper activity. Presbyterianism must languish unless those who, under God, are appointed to administer its system, conscientiously endeavor to render it effective by fulfilling as individuals those duties which are indispensable to the success of the whole operation. As Elders we have neglected our duty in this respect, and it becomes us to repent and come up to the discharge of our whole duty.

V. THE OFFICE OF DEACON—ITS AUTHORITY AND IMPORTANCE.

In this connection the committee would advert to the fact, that the office of Deacon is almost entirely unknown in our church. This departure from our constitutional organization would have been prevented had the Elders brought the subject before their congregations. The office of Deacon is of great importance in our system of government. The care of the poor and the management of the funds of the congregation are committed to his hands, and now, as in the days of the martyred Stephen—who was one of the first in this office—men should be selected who are full of faith and the influence of the Holy Spirit, and set apart to this service in the church. Here another fact reminds us, as rulers in the church of Christ, that we have not come up to our duty. It is for the Elders of the church to keep before the flock under their care the provisions of our constitution and require them to discharge the duties which our form of government requires.

VI. SPIRITUAL DUTIES OF THE ELDERSHIP.

There is a class of spiritual duties which grow out of and contribute more than all others to give salutary influence to the Eldership of the church, which have not been generally discharged with that persevering zeal which the cause of the Great Head of the church has a right to claim at our hands. Elders are the counsellors of the Pastor, and constitute with him the Pastoral Presbytery, the original court of the church. In the absence of a Pastor, either by vacancy in the office or any other cause, the duties in a great measure devolve upon them to supply his place so far as it can possibly be done. They are the spiritual advisers

of the congregation, and it is their duty to see to it that the sanctuary is opened upon the Sabbath, and sacred worship, Bible classes, and the reading either of sermons or some other instructive and edifying matter be provided for their people.

These obvious duties should be observed even where there is a partial supply of ministerial labors under the system now unhappily for the interests of the church so prevalent, that of having only one or two Sabbaths in the month in which the people are accustomed to hear the preaching of the word. But where there is a Presbyterian congregation and no minister to break to them the bread of life, the Elders are bound to call them to the house of God, lead in their devotions and unite in supplications to the great Shepherd of Israel to help and supply them. It is not all of the duty of the Elders to receive members, sign calls for pastors, attend to the secular business of the congregation (a duty properly belonging to the Deacons) and hand round the elements at the communion. The great part of their work is not included in this schedule. To exercise discipline, to cultivate the confidence and affections of all, and especially the young of the congregations in which they are called to rule, to converse with them upon spiritual things, to visit and counsel all the members of the church and their families, especially the sick and the sorrowing; to find out the poor and the destitute and by kind attentions and prompt relief to invite and thus compel them to come to the sanctuary. To atttend prayer meetings and conduct worship when the sanctuary would be closed on account of the absence of a minister; these are some of the duties appertaining to the office to which we are solemnly ordained. Nor can we forget that the Synod of North Carolina have authorized the Elders to appoint and commission to the work under the direction of the Pastor if there be one and the Session, suitable persons, laymen who shall conduct worship and point the way of salvation to our colored domestics; lay preachers of the word for this class of the poor to whom the gospel must be preached. When to these we add the great duty indispensable to the prosperity of the church, of kindly but firmly administering discipline, by watching over its members, and if ascertaining the existence of anything which would mar peace, purity, or unity of the church, to meet it at once with the authority conferred by the Master and arrest the evil. How much of the distraction of many portions of our

Zion could have been prevented if Elders who knew that unkind feelings were arising in the hearts of brethren, which although they might not produce open alienation, would destroy Christian intercourse, had firmly, kindly and in the fear of God, at once interposed their kind offices, sustained by divine authority removed the cause and prevented the disastrous consequences which must result from neglect of their duty. A false delicacy arising out of apprehension that they would be considered intermeddlers, or unnecessarily officious has often prevented the salutary interposition of such authority, and the evil which has followed fully demonstrates the false conclusion which prevented prompt interference. It is the business and calling of an Elder to meet such cases with the authority of his office, meekly but with the spirit of his Master, and resist the inroads of Satan into the camp of the Lord. He is bound to admonish, encourage, advise, and counsel all of the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made him an overseer.

A most interesting portion of an Elder's charge is found in that class consisting of the baptised children of the congregation. To manifest his care for their temporal and spiritual good and secure their respect and affection, to watch over them and pray for them especially, is both a duty and a privilege growing out of the relation which dedication to God in baptism has created between them and the Church. The cultivation of personal piety by cherishing the spirit of family religion, the reading of the Scriptures, family prayers, observance of the Sabbath and all the external means of grace, should be our constant aim, and whenever these are neglected the usefulness of officers of the Church declines, and of necessity Zion mourns. There has been in many portions of our State a decline in the systematic teaching of the Short Catechism, both privately in families and publicly in meetings called for the purpose of catechetical instruction. We fear that all of us have been negligent in this regard, and that much of the peculiar wilfulness and impatience of restraint amongst the young is referable to the absence of the moral restraint which such salutary instruction usually secures. We feel that there is a necessity for a return to ancient usages; that the Elders and Deacons should see to this portion of the moral training of the young, and that here also we need repentance and amendment. These are some of our responsibilities,—great indeed, but our

Master never imposes a responsibility without the accompaniment of a corresponding joy, if it is met and discharged. Your Committee would gratefully acknowledge the goodness of God in inclining the hearts of so many of our brethren to come up to this Council—they trust that a new interest in the prosperity of Zion may be enkindled—that we may return to our homes refreshed and strengthened by our interview; and that under the blessing of our Master the office bearers of the Church in the whole bounds of the Synod may become prayerfully awake to the responsibilities growing out of their vows made in the presence of God and the Church. They recommend the adoption of the following resolutions:

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE CONVENTION.

Resolved, That it is the imperative duty of the Elders and Deacons to take at once the necessary steps for securing a competent pecuniary support for their Pastors and stated supplies.

Resolved, That the several Presbyteries of the Synod of North Carolina be encouraged to continue their efforts to employ, as soon as practicable, a sufficient number of Evangelists to visit and preach in the vacant churches and other promising fields of labor within our territorial limits, and that as Elders and Deacons we will use all necessary diligence to aid such Evangelists and provide for them a proper pecuniary support.

Resolved, That it is the duty of the Elders and Deacons of the Synod of North Carolina to provide for the regular, faithful and systematic spiritual instruction of the colored population within our bounds.

Resolved, That as Elders and Deacons we will exert our influence to have the office of Deacon, recognized in our constitution as of Divine appointment, filled in every congregation within the Synod.

Resolved, That it is the opinion of this Convention that it is the duty of the Elders to visit the members of the church of which they are overseers, and of the congregations in which they are rulers, and converse with them in regard to their spiritual interests.

Resolved, That we recommend to the different Church Sessions within our limits to request the Pastors and supplies to preach an annual sermon upon parental authority and family government and instruction.

Resolved, That the several Church Sessions within the Synod of North Carolina be urged to enforce by salutary discipline the attendance of their Delegates to the Presbyteries and Synods, and in order to the same that there be provision made for the payment of the expenses of the Ministers and Elders representing the several congregations.

Resolved, That we urge the duty of family prayer and the observance of the Sabbath, the neglect of which must necessarily produce ruinous effects upon the church in the destruction of family religion.

Resolved, That each Pastor and Stated Supply be requested to deliver an annual sermon upon the duties of Elders and Deacons.

On motion Convention adjourned to meet at 4 o'clock, P. M.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

Convention met according to adjournment, and spent an hour in devotional exercises, and adjourned to meet at 7 o'clock this evening.

EVENING SESSION.

Convention met and called to order by the President. On motion of R. Gorrell, the reading of the Resolutions offered by the committee was called for, whereupon they were discussed by V. C. Barringer, Dr. E. N. Hutchison, R. Gorrell, C. H. Wiley, A. W. Venable, and R. W. Gibbs; after which the Report and Resolutions were unanimously adopted.

V. C. Barringer offered the following Resolutions, which were unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That the Secretary be instructed to prepare the proceedings of this Convention for publication in the N. C. Presbyterian,—requesting the Editors of said paper to publish with said proceedings the entire Report of the committee on business, and that the Secretary also be instructed to have said proceedings with the Report printed in pamphlet form, and have a copy sent to every Elder and Deacon in the bounds of the Synod.

Also,

Resolved, That a collection be now taken up to defray the expenses of said publication.

The following Resolution by Dr. H. C. Robinson was unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That the recommendation of the N. C. Presbyterian by the Synod of the State, and by the several Presbyteries constituting the same, meets our cordial approbation.

Resolved, That we consider the existence of said paper as of great importance to Presbyterianism in our State, and especially recommend it to the active support of the Elders and Deacons throughout our borders.

The following Resolutions offered by W. S. Harris, were unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That the thanks of this Convention be tendered to the Pastor and Congregation for their friendly attention, and for the use of this Church.

Resolved, That the thanks of this body be tendered to the citizens of Greensboro' and the officers of this Church, for the kindness and hospitality with which they have so cordially greeted us on this occasion.

Resolved, That the thanks of the Convention be tendered to the Chairman for the dignity and propriety with which he has presided over its deliberations.

Resolved, That the thanks of this Convention be also tendered to the Secretaries for the fidelity and diligence with which they have discharged their duties.

On motion, the following Committee was appointed:

A. W. Venable, G. T. Baskerville, Dr. E. Nye Hutchison and R. W. Gibbs.

Who are to appoint the time and place for the reassembling of this Convention, and to give the necessary notice.

On motion, the Convention adjourned to meet at the call of the Committee.

Apostolic Benediction by Rev. J. Jones Smythe.

CHARLES L. PAYNE, *Chairman.*

L. B. KRIMMINGER,
A. Y. SUMMEY,
D. P. WEIR,
} *Secretaries.*